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THE SETTLEMENT AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT
OF POLK COUNTY, MINNESOTA

by

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INTRODUCTION

Polk County is located in the Red River Valley. This region was traversed by Europeans as early as 1734 but no permanent settlement was made within what constitutes the present boundaries of the county until 1870. Polk county formed part of the debatable ground of our northern national boundary 1803-1818. It was a part of our last frontier not being opened to filings until 1870-71. A government land office was maintained at Crookston until 1925. The first permanent settlers are still represented by a few sturdy specimen of those adventurous and determined people who saw an empire added to the productive area of the United States.

There is no local or county historical society to preserve records, a file of newspapers containing much of the early history of the country has not yet found a secure and fire proof home. Much scattered material exists but even with the aid of the memories of the few survivors of the early days of Red River Valley settlement some points are still shrouded in darkness. To bring together the scattered material dealing with the early settlement and development, in some instances to present day conditions, of Polk county is the purpose of this thesis. If it is flavored with antiquarianism the writer offers no apology. He found the delving a pleasant task.

"Hushed upon the boundless prairies,
Is the bison's thundering tread,
And the Redman passes with him,
On the spoilers bounty fed;
But the Norse, the Celt and Saxon,
With their herds increase and find,
'mid these fields of green and yellow,
Plenty e'en for all mankind."

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CHAPTER I

THE BACKGROUND

The first Europeans to visit Minnesota probably entered it from the east.¹ The authentic exploration of Minnesota began with the journey of Radisson and Grossiliers in 1658-1660, which took them to Knife Lake.² The French were soon involved in a boundary dispute with the Hugson's Bay Company, whose charter gave it the title to all the territory draining into that bay, including, of course, the present Polk County and all of the Red River valley lands.³

A Fair knowledge of the Red River region is depicted in a map of 1744, drawn by Arthur Dobb from the description furnished by Joseph La France, a half-breed. On this map Red Lake is placed northwest of the Lake of the Woods, but of course, incorrectly. He correctly represents the entire region as draining to the northward.

There seems to have been but little information among the Americans in 1803 concerning the northern portion of the Louisiana Territory. It would seem that the Americans in general attached no more value to the timber and morasses of upper

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1. The claimants of the authenticity of the Kensington Rune Stone say that Norsemen were the first visitors, but for the falsity of the claim see G. T. Flom, "The Kensington Rune Stone," Transaction of Illinois State Historical Society, 1910, pp. 105-25.
 2. Neill, E. D., "Grossiliers and Radisson," Magazine of Western History, February 1888, pp. 412-16.
 3. Bryce, G., History of Hudson's Bay Company, New York, 1900, p.15.

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Louisiana than they did to Jefferson's salt mountain. Major Stoddard, with no argument at all, assumes that the northern boundary of Louisiana is "a line drawn from the source of Mississippi in forty-seven degrees, forty-two minutes and forty-seconds, north latitude to where the Missouri leaves the shining mountains in nearly the same latitude--".⁴ Where the boundary will ultimately be fixed he admits is open to doubt.⁵ But nowhere in his chapter on "Upper Louisiana" does he mention Red River, or the desirability of holding the land north to forty-ninth parallel.⁶

The American State officials insisted with determination that the intention of the treaty of 1783 was that the forty-ninth parallel could be extended westward indefinitely as a boundary. The British, in August, 1814, proposed that an Indian country be established between the United States and her Canadian possessions, but the American commissioners would not entertain any such proposition.⁷ It was the convention of 1818 that put the boundary at the forty-ninth parallel and made the upper Red River valley, including the present Polk County, undisputedly American soil.

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4. Stoddard, Amos, Sketches of Louisiana, Philadelphia, 1812, p. 149.
 5. Ibid., p. 148
 6. Ibid., pp. 206-41.
 7. American State Papers, "Foreign Affairs," Vol. III, pp. 705-06.

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Previous to this the Hudson's Bay Company had been hard pushed to hold its own.⁸ Mr. Peter Grant of the North-West Company had erected a post on the Red River where St. Vincent now is.⁹ A few years later, 1805, Mr. Henry established himself on the west bank of the Red River opposite the present city of East Grand Forks. Henry traveled over much of what is now Polk County and seems to have had but little fear or respect for the Indians with whom he did business.

The North-West Company sent out David Thompson to determine the latitude of their posts. His travels carried him to the banks of the Red Lake River and eastward from the vicinity of East Grand Forks until he came to the post in charge of Baptiste Cadotte. Its latitude he determined was $47^{\circ} 54' 21''$.¹¹ The city of Red Lake Falls now stands there.

Thompson's observations of the country do not picture a hunter's paradise of the Polk County region. The game was scarce; in the course of a month he did not see the track of a deer or beaver. The Indians seemed very poor.¹²

Nevertheless the Sioux and the Chippewa were engaged in a bitter struggle for an attempt to establish an ownership of the land. Their wars were usually carried on by small and

8. Libby, O. G., "The New Northwest," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, March 1921, pp. 332-47.

9. Cones, Elliott (Editor), New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest, New York, 1897, Vol. I, p. 31 (This is the journal of Alexander Henry).

10. The New Northwest, p. 281

11. Tyrrell, J. B. (ed.) Narrative of David Thompson, Toronto 1916, Vol. I, p. 307

12. Ibid., p. 281.

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desultory parties. In 1823 Major Long found the Chippewa in secure possession of the east side of the Red River valley as far south as the Wild Rice River. South of it was "A sort of debatable land, which both Chippewas and Decotas (Sioux) claim, upon which both frequently hunt, but always in a state of preparation for hostilities."¹³ In 1863 the United States government ended all this bickering by removing the Sioux to a more western location.¹⁴

Major Amos Stoddard was appointed civil commandant of the Louisiana Territory north of the thirty-third parallel; the region was called "District of Louisiana." It was attached to the territory of Indiana for governmental and judicial purposes, but organized separately in 1805.¹⁵ Minnesota became a territory in 1849 and was admitted into the Union in 1858.

13. Keating, Vol. II, p. 9

14. Folwell, W. W., History of Minnesota, St. Paul, 1912, Vol. I, p. 307

15. Stoddard, p. 102; Annals of Congress, Vol. XIII pp. 1293 passim.

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CHAPTER II

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE COUNTRY

How the Red River Valley passed from the possession of the Indians, was occupied by a people who overcame the wilderness, and organized a government for the country and established cities and towns is the subject matter of this chapter.

In 1851 Governor Ramsay had conducted negotiations with the Chippowas for the cession of their land in the Red River Valley as far south as the Buffalo River. For some reason, however, the Senate did not ratify this treaty.¹

On October 12, 1863, another treaty was made for the cession of the same land. Alexander Ramsay and Ashley C. Morrill were the commissioners for the United States. Article I gave the boundaries. Article III provided that \$20,000 per year was to be paid to the Indians for a term of twenty years. Article IV provided that they should receive amnesty for past offenses committed on certain British and American traders.² Article V provided that each chief was to get \$500. at the first payment to build himself a house, as a good example to others of the tribe. Article VIII provided that a homestead of 160 acres should be given to the adult males provided no scrip should be issued and no assignments made of any right, title, or interest until a patent

1. Bond, J. W. Minnesota and Its Resources, New York, 1854 p. 281.

2. In 1862 while passing down the old Red River trail Kittson's carts had been plundered by them. (R. Blakeley, Opening of the Red River of the North, collection of Minnesota Historical Society, Vol. VIII, p. 50).

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should be issued, no patent to be issued until due proof of five years of residence and cultivation was shown. Article IX was put in at the request of the Indians who wanted a special favor granted to two chiefs. It provided that 640 acres near the mouth of the Thief River be granted to the chief "Moose Dung", and 640 acres on the north side of the Pembina River be granted the chief "Red Bear".³

This treaty was not ratified by the Senate, but that body had a supplementary treaty drawn up which was concluded in Washington, D. C., April 12, 1864. Clark W. Thompson and Ashley C. Morrill were the United States commissioners; sixteen Indians represented their folk. In Article X of the supplementary treaty the Indians assented to the amendments. In Article II the payments were reduced, giving the Red Lake band \$10,000 and the Pombina band \$5,000 respectively, for as many years as the President of the United States wished to pay it. Another important change was in Article VII, which now stated that scrip would be issued which could be located on only ceded land.⁴ Thus, the homestead provision was done away with.

Of the Indians signers thirteen were of the Red Lake band and three were of the Pombina band. Their names were:

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3. Kappler, C. J., Indian Affairs Laws and Treaties, Washington, 1903, Vol. II, p. 653.
 4. Ayer, E. E., (Collector) Treaties Between the United States and the Indians, Vol. III. In the Ayer's collection, Newberry Library.

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| 1. He that is spoken to | 10. Equal Sky |
| 2. Moose-Dung | 11. Straight Bird |
| 3. Little Rock | 12. Oah-shay-o-sick (no interpretation given) |
| 4. Red Bear | 13. He that makes the ground tremble |
| 5. Leading Feather | 14. Kay-tush-ke-web-a-tung (no interpretation given) |
| 6. The Boy | 15. Wanta Feathers |
| 7. Dropping Wind | 16. Bad Boy |
| 8. Little Shoe | |
| 9. White Hair | |

The treaty was signed in the presence of P. H. Beaulieu, J. G. Morrison, and Peter Roy, special interpreters. T. A. Warren was the United States interpreter; Charles E. Gardell and Charles Bottoneau were witnesses.

The treaty was ratified April 21, 1864, and proclaimed April 25, 1864.

Previous to the cession, the state legislature had created Polk County on July 20, 1858. The boundaries were given as: "commencing at the south-west corner of Pembina County, and running up the Red River to the mouth of Buffalo River; thence easterly along the northern boundaries of Breckenridge and Becker counties, to the northeast corner of Becker county; thence in a direct line to the head of Itaska Lake; thence northerly following the western boundaries of Case and Itaska counties to the southeast corner of Pembina County; thence west to the place of beginning." The county seat was

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declared to be, "hereby temporarily located at Douglas."⁵

No changes were made in the boundaries until the establishment of Clay County in 1862 placed the south line between townships 142 and 143.⁶ When Beltrami County was established in 1866, the east line was put between ranges thirty-eight and thirty-nine.⁷ These changes were made before Polk County was organized, and probably were unopposed as the population of the original county was to be found largely within the newly established counties. The influx of settlers in 1872 brought up the question of organizing Polk County.

It would seem that the political situation in Minnesota had much to do with getting such a sparsely populated region organized. The Republican party was preparing for a State Convention to be held in the fall of 1872; Governor Austin's friends in the Red River Valley were trying to bring the valley counties into line. A Clay County man write to the Governor as follows:

"Mr. Finkle, one of our most important men and marchants, will visit the lower country soon, as to delegates to the Republican State Convention from this county. He purposes to call upon you and through him you can learn further particulars."⁸

5. Laws of Minnesota, 1858, Chapter LXVII.

6. Special Laws of Minnesota, 1862, p. 262.

7. General Laws of Minnesota, 1866, p. 90.

8. Letter to Governor Austin, April 13, 1872, in Minnesota Historical Society Library.

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On July 9, 1872, Mr. Finkle wrote to Governor Austin from Red Lake River crossing (Crookston of today). He recommended that William Ross, Jacob Myers, and C. J. A. Morrison be appointed county commissioners of Polk County. They were appointed July 15, 1872.⁹

When the Republican Senatorial District Convention was held, Mr. Finkle was the Polk County delegate. A resolution was passed prohibiting unorganized counties from sending delegates to the nominating conventions of next year.¹⁰

The actual organization of Polk County took place October 21, 1872. The county commissioners held their first meeting, a special one, on that day. The county was divided into three commissioner districts. Present at this meeting were Commissioners William Ross and Jacob Myers; the Clerk was E. M. Walsh.¹¹

At the general election held November 5, 1872 the commissioners appointed by the Governor were replaced by E. C. Davis, James Jenks, and Lars H. Gordon. They held their meeting January 7, 1873. The business transacted was to set the liquor license fee and accept the bonds of the county officers.¹²

9. Letter in Miscellaneous County Organization Documents, in Minnesota Historical Society Library.

10. Red River Gazette, Clydon, Minnesota, October 10, 1872

11. Minutes of the Polk County Commissioners, Vol. I

12. Ibid.

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Crookston, by general consent, was called the county seat of Polk County. The Legislative Manual of 1873 gives Crookston as the county seat. However, it was not until February 1879 that it was legally such, the legislature so designating it at that time. Shortly afterward the commissioners voted to build a court house. It was completed in March 1882.

The only boundary dispute into which Polk County was to enter occurred a few years after its organization. It arose in this way. The acts of 1858 establishing Polk and Pembina counties had made the line running east from the mouth of the Turtle River the line between them. This line runs through townships numbered 154, if the real Turtle River is used as the starting point. Some old maps show the Turtle River emptying into the Red River at a point some miles farther north.¹³ This is because the Turtle during high water empties part of its water through a slough and this outlet was mistaken for the real one. Therefore, many Polk County citizens shut their eyes to the real outlet and maintained that townships numbered 155 constituted the northernmost tier of townships. Others thought a county boundary line could only run between tiers of townships and therefore they insisted that the line east from the Turtle ran between townships numbered 154 and 155. When

13. Andreas A., Illustrated Historical Atlas of Minnesota, Chicago, 1874, pp. 12, 182.

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Marshall County was created in 1879 its southern boundary was designated as the line between townships numbered 154 and 155. The county seat was put temporarily on the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$, and SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 36 in township 155-48.¹⁴ This site was just north of the village of Warren, which now was left in a strip of unorganized territory about one and one-half sections wide lying between Polk and Marshall counties. Of course, at that time it was thought to be in Polk County, and in fact, its inhabitants paid their taxes to the Polk County Treasurer. The people of Warren were anxious to have the county seat in their village rather than just across a section line from them. Therefore, in the election of 1881 there was submitted to the voters of the Polk County a proposition to put the northern boundary of Polk County on the south side of townships number 154.¹⁵ This failed to carry, much to the disgust of the citizens of Warren who alleged that bogus election returns had been sent in, and they proposed to go behind the returns and work up a case.¹⁶ At this point it was discovered that the act creating Polk County set its northern boundary on the line running east from the Turtle River and that the slough was not the river and therefore Warren was neither in Polk nor Marshall

14. Polk County Journal, Crookston, Minnesota, March 14, 1879.

15. General Laws of Minnesota, 1881, p. 141.

16. Grand Forks Herald, Grand Forks, D.T., December 13, 1881.

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County. The situation was remedied by the legislature passing "an act to attach certain unorganized territory to Marshall County, and to establish the southern boundary of said Marshall County." The matter was thus settled definitely in favor of Warren, but the Polk County commissioners did not rest in the matter until their own county attorney had produced evidence that the line had been correctly determined.¹⁷

The first decrease in area following the coming of the permanent settlers was made in 1881. The movement was started by the Norwegians who had settled in the southern part of the county. They believed that they were opposed in their schemes by the rest of the county.¹⁸ The question of division was peaceably settled by the southern portion of the county aiding Crookston to secure the county seat in return for the vote of Crookston for the division of the county.¹⁹ The new county was named Norman.

The next division, and last, of the county occurred in 1897 when Red Lake County was created. This move originated in 1889. The people around Red Lake Falls petitioning the State Legislature for a special election upon the division. Minneapolis real estate dealers who were heavily interested Red Lake Falls real estate were strong supporters of the

17. Minutes of Polk County Commissioners, Vol.I, March 12, August 27, 1883

18. Polk County Journal, October 12, 1882

19. Ibid., October 5, 1882, and statements of Judge William Watts to the author

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movement. Following the failure of this move little was done until 1896 when the proposition was voted upon at the election of that year and carried. ²⁰

The demands for the organization of civil townships were continually pouring in upon the county commissioners. The first petition for such an organization came from the southwestern part of the county. The commissioners, in January 6, 1874, established the town of Shelley. It compressed townships numbered 145-48, 146-48, 145-49, and 146-49. All these lands lie in the present county of Norman. The next town to be established was Huntsville on March 1, 1874. It is within the present Polk County, Crookston town, which was established March 28, 1876, included four townships. The present town of Crookston, 150-46, was set off on July 16, 1877 and held its first town meeting in the Railroad Depot, August 4, 1877. In 1878 three towns were created, but following the completion of the railroad the increased immigration to the county caused the creation of towns to boom. The record by years is: 1879, fourteen; 1880, twenty; 1881, twelve; 1892, seventeen; 1883, seven; 1884, eight; 1885, two; 1886, two; 1887, one. The last town to be organized was Brandt, 153-46, in 1901.

The desire to own a city lot rather than a Red River Valley farm seems to have prompted many who entered Polk County. The

20. Crookston Times, Crookston, Minnesota, June 1, 1897.

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rush to the lands along the Red Lake River was due to the news that the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad was to commence building operations. Where the railroad would cross Red Lake River it was thought a city would spring up. When the railroad engineers reached the site of the present city of Crookston they found it occupied by some persons who had made a fortunate guess as to where the crossing would be located.

William H. Stuart had staked his claim on June 7, 1872, by metes and bound, the government survey not having yet reached the river. His claim, and those of his neighbors, were jumped by the railway engineers who seem to have been abetted by the United Land Officers in their evil designs. The disputes between the claimants of the town site prevented it from being developed, and held back the growth of the settlement for some years. One facetious editor reported that a joke had been played on the grasshoppers, as Crookston claim hunters covered every half-way desirable site with preemption filings so thickly that they could not get on.²¹ When Stuart's claim and those of his neighbors came before the Commissioner-General of the Land Office he, with scathing rebukes to the Register of the local United Land Office, decided the cases in favor of Stuart and his neighbors.²²

21. Detroit Record, Detroit, Minnesota, April 12, 1873

22. Records of the Oak Lake Land Office, May 15, 16, August 19, 1873, April 21, September 5, 1874. Papers are in Minnesota Historical Society Library.

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With the settlement of the claim cases Crookston was platted as a town site in 1875, but remained under the township form of government until 1879. Crookston had become a steamboat and railroad center in 1873.²³ The floating population, drunks on the streets, and a general lack of responsibility for the affairs of the town caused the first demand for a change in administration.²⁴ On January 8, 1879, a meeting was held to discuss incorporating as a city, for the gradual increase of the lawless element called for a government that could insure real protection.²⁵ A committee was appointed to frame a charter. On February 14, 1879, the charter was approved. Mr. E. C. Davis was elected as Crookston's first mayor. One of the first acts of the city council was to authorize the building of a city lock-up and the taking of a census. The census report shows that in May 1879 Crookston had a population of 987.²⁶ (For the growth of the city see chart No. I).

Second to Crookston in point of importance in the early days was the settlement known as Fisher's Landing on the Red Lake River. Above this point navigation was difficult and when the railroad built a spur line to the Landing it at once

23. Detroit Record, September 9, 1874.

24. Polk County Journal, October 25, 1877.

25. Ibid., January 10, 1879.

26. Record Number I of the City of Crookston.

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developed into a transfer point of importance. It had no government for some years save that of the township form, consequently became quite a western town, having "saloons till you can't rest" and gamblers to relieve the unwary traveler of his funds.²⁷

A stage line left Fisher's Landing daily for Grand Forks and Winnipeg, but with the completion of the railroad to Grand Forks the place declined in importance. The present village of Fisher was platted in 1877 on the hill just above the old landing.²⁸

The city of East Grand Forks developed around the settlement made there in 1869. A post office named Tillia was established there June 7, 1872. An attempt to start a city there was made some years later, but the citizens of Grand Forks put in a free ferry and sold at cost to the east side farmers thus discouraging business men from settling there.²⁹ Disreputable enterprises, however, did establish themselves there. The group of buildings on the point was for a few years known as "Struggle Town." The town site was platted in December 1881 and the name of the post office changed to East Grand Forks.³⁰ Its unsavory reputation persisted. At one time the demimondes

27. Andubon Journal, Andubon, Minnesota, May 5, June 16, 1877.

28. Ibid., July 14, October 13, 1877.

29. Polk County Journal, November 2, 1882.

30. Polk County Journal, April 5, 1883.

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from all towns within a fifty mile radius assembled there for a wild masquerade.³¹ At the present time East Grand Forks is a bustling wide-awake community of which the county may well be proud.

The other incorporated cities or villages of the county started out like the one described by a Red River Valley sight-seer of the '80's:- "Small in population, large in hopes, and abundant in prairie chickens."³² Their names and population are given in chart number I.

Even though the citizens by 1875 had established a large degree of local self-government nevertheless all serious infractions of the law prior to 1879 had to be tried outside the county as it was attached to other counties for judicial purposes. A coroner's jury in October 1878 finding two women guilty of the murder of a baby had them bound over to the District Court of Clay County.³³ Somewhat earlier when attached to Becker County a horse thief had been apprehended and taken to Detroit for trial. In February, 1879, the legislature declared Polk County a completely organized county and the first term of District Court for the Eleventh Judicial convened at Crookston July 10, 1879. Judge O. P. Stearns was on the bench

31. Grand Forks Herald, December 8, 1881, November 23, 1883, March 15, 1884.

32. Van Dyke, Henry, Harpers Monthly, May 1880, p. 817.

33. Polk County Journal, October 18, 1878.

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and Reuben Reynold was clerk. Four criminal cases of a minor sort were tried.³⁴

While the early settlers had some tough characters among themselves no gross murder occurred until in 1880. Alexander Gillon had in January 1880 viciously assaulted and killed P. B. Snyder of Crookston in an East Grand Forks saloon.³⁵ This was the first murderer's trial to be held in Polk County and attracted much attention, particularly so, as W. W. Erwin was Gillon's lawyer and to see him plead to a jury was, it is said, a rare sight. Gillon was found not guilty. Crookston people felt the verdict was a travesty on justice.

An attempt was made to ascertain to some extent at least what the public opinion of the county is today on the question of law enforcement. Violations of the liquor laws was selected for study. The District Court records furnishing the material. The first case did not come before the court until December 19, 1887, eight years after Polk County had a District Court. Judge Ira B. Mills was on the bench, he had taken his seat in May 1887.

Some 800 cases were found to have been recorded between December 19, 1887 and the end of 1925. In some cases it was impossible to discover what disposition was made. The Grand Jury indictment is explicit, the case is postponed, and then

34. Court Record A, June Term 1879, Polk County.

35. Grand Forks Herald, January 8, 1880.

often disappears from the docket. The early record of liquor cases is pictured in the following cases selected at random in the court minutes:

<u>Defendant</u>	<u>Disposition of case</u>
- - - - -	\$100.00 and costs
- - - - -	\$100.00 and costs.
- - - - -	State witness did not appear. Dismissed.
- - - - -	State rested case. Dismissed by court.
- - - - -	Dismissed. State refused to go to trial.
- - - - -	Dismissed. State refused to go to trial.
- - - - -	Not guilty.
- - - - -	Defendant not found.

No license or selling to a minor constituted the majority of the violations. There seems to be some evidence that protection was given to certain saloons in Sunday opening. East Grand Forks furnished by far the greatest number of cases.

What the sentiment was towards the enforcement of the liquor laws in the early days is difficult to ascertain by the available sources. Some of the citizens of Crookston city say that the farmers were the only objectors to the saloon as an institution. In 1884 the citizens of Reis township (147-46) petitioned the county commissioners to revoke the liquor licenses within their town. The petition was refused as no violation of law was in evidence.



A Republican nominee for sheriff, 1878, found it expedient³⁷ to dispose of his saloon in answer to popular protest.

In the same year temperance lectures were being delivered throughout the county and a Blue Ribbon Society was organized.³⁸

The inhabitants of the county had at least one good reason for not drinking the water with which nature had supplied the region. The water was from shallow wells or from the rivers and was not palatable.³⁹ "We all drink beer up this way" was said to one visitor who adds, "from the number of saloons to be seen in every town and village, one can easily credit the statement."⁴⁰

In the summer of 1883 a branch of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union was established in Crookston. When the Crookston City Directory was issued in 1915 it listed twenty-one saloons, in the same year the county was voted dry. The division of votes is shown in Chart No. XII.⁴¹

37. Polk County Journal, October 25, 1878.

38. Ibid., November 8, 1878.

39. Crookston Times, February 5, 1887.

40. Polk County Journal, November 9, 1882

41. Compiled from the returns of the election on file in Polk County Auditor's office.

CHAPTER III

TRANSPORTATION IN THE COUNTY

The subject of transportation is a topic of vital importance to any frontier community. It shall be the purpose of the author in this chapter to state the methods, and also the development of transportation in Polk County.

The earliest means of transportation was the Red River ox-cart which was constructed entirely of wood. The carts passing through Polk County made use of two trails (the inhabitants today think that there was but one trail across the country.) The traces of the later trails are still easy to discern, and its existence is a well known fact to some of the early permanent settlers of Polk County.¹ The older trail (map no. I) lay closer to the Red River, and traces of it have vanished. None of the persons interviewed by the writer knew that such a trail had existed. Hargrave, who traveled on the Red River in 1861, calls the trail "the Plain Road," and the later one he names the "the Wood Road."²

The earliest map found by the writer depicting "the Plain Road," was that of the Long expedition of 1823. Where the party crossed into what is now Norman County, the trail was "nine miles" distant from the mouth of the Wild Rice River.

1. Mr. E. M. Walsh, Crookston, Minnesota.

2. Hargrave, J. J, Red River, Montreal, 1871, p. 250.

The observation taken near the Grand Forks found them in longitude $96^{\circ} 53' 45''$ W. At this point they inclined to the east along the Red Lake River for a few miles to where it was forded, but "from the steepness of the banks we experienced some difficulty in getting our carts over."³ Manton Marble, in 1860, made his return journey from Pembina over the old trail, crossing Red Lake River about where Fisher is now located. A map of 1855 shows "the Plain Road" marked as the "Route from Pembina to St. Paul."⁴ It crossed the Red Lake River in the neighborhood of the present site of Fisher. A map of 1860 does not show "the Plain Road", but has the easternmost trail marked as the "Pembina Trail."⁵ Besides the visible traces of the new trail the writer was able to check its course across the Polk County by entries made in the summer of 1872, by surveyors of the exterior township lines when their lines crossed the trail.

With the beginning of steamboat navigation on the Red River the trade over the trails decreased. The first steamboat on Red River was the "Anson Northrup", launched in 1859. Goods were hauled in wagons to Georgetown and there loaded on the steamer. Most of the goods went through to Fort Garry, as Mr.

3. Keating, Narrative of an Expedition to the Sources of the St. Peter's, London, 1825, Vol. II, p. 31

4. Young, J. H. Map of Minnesota Territory, Published by Charles Desilver, Philadelphia, 1855. Copy is in Newberry Library

5. Ensign, Bridgeman, Fanning, Sectional Map of Minnesota, 1860

Ramsay Crooks had arranged for the carrying of Hudson's Bay Company goods in bond through the United States.

Steamboating within Polk County did not really begin until the St. Paul and Pacific railroad reached the Red Lake River and freight was shipped to that point. Within two years all freight carried by the St. Paul and Pacific railroad, which was billed for Fort Garry and other points down river, was shipped to Crookston and transferred to the steamers for carriage to destination.

Boating on the Red Lake River for some twenty miles below Crookston was unsatisfactory, as the river was crooked and shallow. To avoid this stretch of river, a railroad was built from Crookston to Fisher's Landing saving twenty-five miles of river travel.⁶ Fisher's Landing became the transfer point for the river trade.

With the completion of the St. Paul and Pacific railroad to Grand Forks in 1880, steamboating on the Red Lake River may be said to have ceased.

In 1871 the main line of the St. Paul and Pacific (now the Great Northern) was built through to Breckenbridge. In May 1872, the St. Paul and Pacific engineers started a survey north from Glyndon and a construction crew started in their wake. When the engineers reached Red Lake River they dis-

6. Coulter, John Lee, Industrial History of the Valley of the Red River of the North, Collection of the State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck, 1910, Vol. III, p. 584

covered that the line was too far east of the Red River and out of the original survey lines which had been run prior to 1872; Colonel Crooks, who was in charge of the party, retraced his steps and started from a point three or four miles south of Red Lake River and made a curve which brought the line of the railroad to the present site of Crookston.⁷ The track was laid to the Red Lake River and a bridge was under construction by September 7, 1872.⁸ The crossing was effected in the same month. A considerable passenger as well as freight traffic was going over the road to Crookston by October.⁹ That winter the road went into bankruptcy and Mr. J. P. Farley was appointed receiver in 1873.¹⁰

In the summer of 1875 some of the rails from the track north of Crookston were taken up and relaid on a road bed constructed by members of the Merchant's Steamboat Line between Crookston and Fisher's Landing. They planned to get some trade for their line of boats, but Hill and Kittson bought the line, and the steamboats went with it, four months after it had started operations.¹¹ They immediately incorpo-

7. Crookston Times, November 14, 1885.

8. Detroit Record, September 7, 1872.

9. Red River Gazette, October 17, 1872

10. Pyle, J. G. Life of James J. Hill, New York, 1926, Vol. I, p. 162.

11. Pyle, Vol. I, p. 192

rated it with their own line of boats as the Red River Valley Transportation Company. Farley fell in with the plan saying: "We expect to control over our own line the entire traffic of Manitoba by running in connection with a daily line of boats terminating at Fisher's Landing."¹² This was what Mr. Hill had been hoping for. He had planned to get hold of the St. Paul and Pacific and make it the means of developing an agricultural empire.¹³ If it had built up a trade before he secured possession that would be so much the better. Mr. Hill believed, however, that the west side of the Red River offered a much better field for local freight.

Until 1877 there were no trains that ran over the St. Vincent Extension during the winter months. The people around the Red Lake River settlement found themselves shut off from the world until some of them fitted a flat car with sails and ran it down to Glyndon when the wind was right and snows permitted.¹⁴ The resumption of train operations was always hailed with delight by the settlers of the Valley.¹⁵

The inhabitants of the valley were keenly aware of the value of railroads to their prosperity. At a convention of Polk County voters held in 1874 to select a delegate to a

12. Pyle, J. G., Life of James J. Hill, New York 1926, Vol. I., p. 194

13. Ibid., pp. 170, 194, 195.

14. Alden, Ogle and Company, Album of Biography Red River and Park Regions, Chicago, 1889, pp. 282, 504.

15. Andubon Journal, July 1, 1876; April 14, 1877.



congressional convention in Minneapolis, the delegate chosen was instructed to vote for King, who was in favor of extending the time for the completion of the St. Vincent Extension.¹⁶ The Northern Pacific railroad was very threatening to the St. Vincent Extension. It was reported to be trying to get its line to St. Vincent, and have a forfeiture declared on the Crookston to St. Vincent part of the St. Paul and Pacific.¹⁷ By the terms of its charter the St. Vincent Extension would have forfeited its land grant if not completed by the specified date.

At the time for the completion of the road approached, great fear was felt for the future of the country, for if a forfeiture was declared many knew their future was blasted. A mass convention was held at Sauk Centre, August 30, 1876, to consider what method would be best to protect the interests of the settlers. At the meeting a resolution was passed requesting that the representatives of the people pledge themselves to get the railraod completed.¹⁸ When an engine and coach of the Northern Pacific ran to Fisher's Landing, with officials aboard, it was reported to be spying for facts to use against the St. Vincent Extension in the next legislature, and the Governor was accused of working against the interests

16. Detroit Record, August 29, 1874.

17. Pyle, Vol. I, pp. 166, 222.

18. Andubon Journal, August 19, 1876; September 9, 1876.

of the people.¹⁹ The road was made to suffer the most bitter and unscrupulous persecutions, and the Governor wilfully refused, it was charged, to certify lands to the company, and thereby caused settlers to stay out of the valley. The man appointed by the Governor to inspect the road "in doing everything in his power to cripple it."²⁰ When Pillsbury was re-nominated the Polk County folk had no congratulations for him.²¹

Meanwhile work on the St. Paul-Pacific was advancing. The connection of that road with Breckenbridge on the Northern Pacific railraod was made in October 1877, and Polk County was twenty-four hours nearer to St. Paul.²² The railroad offered its land on very easy terms and by the fall of 1877 most of the railroad lands in ranges 46, 47, and 48 were taken.²³ It would seem that the receiver, Mr. Farley, had been a conscientious worker at his task. In September, 1877, Mr. Hill estimated the length of its main line in the Red River Valley at 104 miles, and the Red River Valley Railroad from Crookston to Fisher's Landing at 10 6/10 miles. The grading, too, between the end of the line north of Crookston to St. Vincent some sixty-seven miles was nearly completed.²⁴ The road was bought by Hill and his associates on March 13, 1878.²⁵

19. Andubon Journal, September 15, 1877.

20. Ibid., September 22, 1877.

21. Ibid., October 6, 1877.

22. Ibid., November 3, 1877.

23. Ibid., October 20, 1877.

24. Pyle, Vol. II, p. 415.

25. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 233.

In that same year (1878) the line was completed to St. Vincent, but by far the more important line was to Fisher's Landing. In April, 1878, the train to it was the largest and most occupied of any leaving St. Paul over any road.²⁶

In May, 1879 Hill organized the road, naming it the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railroad Company, and gave stock of it in exchange for that of the Red River Valley company, which controlled the Red River boats and railroad from Crookston to Fisher's Landing.²⁷ From Fisher's Landing the line was quickly pushed on to Grand Forks. Hill, with his customary kindness, did not grade the road bed where grain had been planted until the farmers had harvested their crops, but even with that hold up the first train arrived at East Grand Forks on October 22, 1879.²⁸

While the struggle for railroads was going on, the building of dirt roads went on apace. One of the earliest demands for a road was made in April 1874, and it was to be established between Crookston and Grand Forks. The county commissioners had a hard time fixing an exact location, for every farmer near it wanted the road to run by his claim.²⁹ The need of good bridges across the numerous streams of Polk County was also advocated

26. Pyle, Vol. I, p. 260

27.

28. Grand Forks Herald, July 31, August 14, October 23, 1879

29. Minutes Polk County Commissioners, Vol. I, April 24, 1874



by the settlers; each demand was for some particular part of the county.³⁰ At the meeting of the county commissioners July 24, 1882, a total of \$1,252.50 was appropriated for bridges and road work. During the year ending February 28, 1882, Polk County expended \$7,025.33 upon bridges and roads.³¹ This was twenty-three per cent of the total expenditures. In 1884, Tabor township (153-48) had 72 miles of roads which were to be ditched and graded. Payment was to be made in town bonds running from five to six years, drawing ten per cent interest.³²

The story of roads is hard to trace, for the first settlers took their bad roads for granted. The first book of biographies of Polk County settlers has next to nothing in regard to roads.³³ But a later one, when settlers had had an opportunity to compare their good roads with the ones over which they had travelled some thirty years before, has many reminiscences concerning the terrible roads and the lack of roads in the early days.³⁴

30. Polk County Journal, August 16, December 20, 1878.

31. Ibid., April 19, 1883.

32. Ibid., April 17, 1884

33. Album of Biography Red River and Park Regions.

34. Ogle, George and Company (Editor), Compendium of History and Biography, Northern Minnesota, Chicago, 1902,
pp. 416, 474, 537, 747, 780.



CHAPTER IV

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The pioneers, and interested parties of Polk County, found themselves engaged in various occupations, some of which proved to be of lasting value to the country at large. The most important industries included fur, lumber and agriculture.

At how early a date fur trade first began is not known to the author. Manton Marble in 1860 saw Peter Hayden, an Irishman at Pembina, who had packed furs to Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, and was considered about the first to lead trade through the Red River Valley.¹ No dates are given by Marble on Hayden's activities.

The Hudson's Bay Company in 1821 had absorbed the North West Company, and had secured a monopoly of the fur trade business on the Lower Red River Valley, as it required all furs taken in its territory to be marketed from its posts.² In 1844, the American Fur Company sent Mr. N. W. Kittson to establish a post at Pembina to divert the fur and buffalo hide trade of the American part of the Red River Valley toward St. Paul. In his first year there the fur sent to St. Paul filled but six carts; in 1850 the furs carried out were worth \$15,000, and goods hauled back were valued at \$10,000; in 1855 furs worth

1. Marble, M., "Red River and Beyond," Harpers Monthly, October 1860, p. 582.

2. Gunn, H. C., "The Fight for Free Trade in Rupert's Land," Mississippi Valley Historical Society Proceedings, Vol. IV, pp. 82-83.

\$40,000 and goods hauled back were worth \$34,000. In 1858 it took over six hundred carts to transport the trade between Pembina and St. Paul.³

When one recalls the statement of Thompson's concerning the scarcity of game in Polk County⁴ It is doubtful whether this region contributed very much to the amount of goods hauled.

The detaching of the eastern portion of Polk County, in 1866, to form Beltrami County caused Polk to lose most of its timber land. The headwaters of the rivers, however, were in the detached portion and logs were floated down through Polk County and on to Winnipeg. There was a feeling in the valley that the logs should be stopped before they reached the Canadian line and be manufactured within the United States.⁵ In 1883 Mr. T. B. Walker, who was driving logs through Polk County down to Winnipeg found the Winnipeg firm to which he was selling "all in", and began to look about for a mill site.⁶ Mr. Walker examined the ground at Grand Forks, D. T., but decided nothing could be done there, and going to Crookston announced his intentions of building the mills there and also of the construction of booms at Crookston.⁷ A company, the Crookston Boom and Water power, was organized with T. B. Walker, president, and W. D. Hurlbut, secretary. The work on a mill to cost \$100,000.00

3. Flandrau, C. E., History of Minnesota, St. Paul 1900, pp. 75-77

4. Supra, Chapter II.

5. Grand Forks Herald, March 1, 1882

6. Holcombe, R. I., Compendium of History and Biography Polk County Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1916, p. 73

7. Polk County Journal, June 14, 1883.

was begun, but soon stopped by Walker, as the Red Lake River Boom and Water Power Company, a company of Crookston men, was, he alleged, trying to get a monopoly on all the boom sites, and bank rights so as to force him to pay their price for such rights. A meeting was held at which Walker delivered an ultimatum to the effect that the Crookston Company would either cease buying up the boom sites or he would move his men to Grank Forks. The town folk were quite concerned and considerable pressure was brought to bear upon the Red Lake River Boom and Water power Company. The dispute was soon adjusted, and work was resumed.

The mill furnished employment not only in the mill itself, but to many who worked upon the river. Inexperienced driving hands received one dollar and experienced drivers \$1.50 to \$2.00 per day. These drivers would bring into the booms about 14,000,000 feet of logs each year and then the mill would start running both day and night with a crew of 400 men.⁸ In 1887 about 22,000,000 feet of logs were brought down.⁹ Much of the log supply came from the sale of logs by the Indians' Agent, from trees that were down, or timber that was burned, such being sold at auction. It was openly charged that much of this timber was only down or burned, after the lumber men got into the woods, as the bids sometimes covered 4,000,000 feet of logs.¹⁰ It was believed

8. Crookston Times, April 17, 1886.

9. Ibid., April 9, 1887

10. Polk County Journal, April 10, 1884.

that Walker desired a monopoly on the pine land, because he opposed Senator Nelson's plan of opening the Red Lake Indian Reservation and wished to go on taxing the settlers on "extra clear profit of from \$5.00 to \$6.00 per thousand feet on every stick they use." Be that as it may, the mill kept on running and paid its men in Crookston. The pay roll some months totaling \$10,000.00 for the mill men. In 1889 the 275 drivers brought down 25,000,000 feet of logs. In 1894 the mill cut 18,000,000 feet of lumber the largest run made to that time.¹¹ Mr. Walker experienced financial difficulties after 1893 and the mill shut down for a while but finally sold to the Shelvin and Carpenter company who continued to operate it until about 1913 when it was shut down and shortly afterwards the buildings were destroyed by a fire.¹²

The agricultural industry was of vast importance to Polk County. Settlers were anxious to get land and had taken up claims before the government had started its survey in 1872. The St. Vincent Railroad Extension survey also, began work at about the same time. Then the railroad lands were ordered withdrawn from sale or location. If persons had located on a railroad section prior to its definite location they were allowed to prove up.¹³ In Crookston township (150-46) nearly all the

11. Crookston Times, November 17, 1894.

12. Walker, T. B., Memories of the Early Life and Development of Minnesota, Minnesota Historical Society Collections, Vol. 15, p. 473.

13. Letter Files, Oak Lake Land Office, February 6, 1872.

railroad lands had passed into private ownership by 1885. Land was sold to bonaza farmers who would in some cases have eighty plows turning over the rich black soil of his 7,500 acre farm. On one farm two hundred horses and one hundred men were at work.¹⁴

The farmers depended chiefly upon oxen for work animals. The county in 1877 had 343 farms and only 232 horses, or less than one to a farm. 1,171 beef and working cattle were reported as were 1,008 cows, 319 sheep and 247 hogs.¹⁵ It would appear that the farmers were not inclined to diversified farming even from the first, but put their faith in wheat. In 1872 Polk County raised 296 bushels of wheat; in 1873 there were 4,728 bushels. In 1877, from Ada, then in Polk County, fifty-six carloads of wheat had been shipped out by November 24. In 1876, 2,491 acres were in wheat; 5,036 acres were planted in 1877; one man raised 540 bushels on twelve acres that ran 64 pounds to the bushel. The McCormick Self-Binder was hailed as a great aid to the wheat farmer and competition between rivals companies was keen; crowds would gather to watch the rivals machines cut a piece of wheat. No one appeared to desire forested land, every one wanted the easily broken prairie land with the quick returns of the cash crop-wheat.¹⁶

14. Polk County Journal, June 14, 23, 1883.

15. Ibid., July 28, 1878.

16. Polk County Journal, July 28, 1878.

One great difficulty of the first wheat farmers was the securing of seed wheat. Cash was scarce and so was wheat. Mr. Martin Hoover helped many farmers around Crookston in getting grain for seed. His efforts caused much land to be planted that otherwise would have lain idle.¹⁷ For the first few years some farmers disposed of practically their entire crop to the incoming settlers for seed. The Hudson's Bay Company stores at Grand Forks and Caledonia, both in Dakota Territory helped the farmers.

Grasshoppers in 1876 caused considerable damage and about 1882 wild mustard was announced as a menace to future prosperity. At this time diversified farming was begun to be advocated. The editor of a valley paper pointed to the 147 carloads of feed received in his city that sold for \$1.75 per cwt. when it should have been produced at home.¹⁸ Another editor urged the farmers to get more stock and less machinery, to put back into the soil some of the nutriment removed from it.¹⁹

Mr. James J. Hill now offered to help stock the country with blooded bulls and good hogs to encourage stock raising.²⁰ When the county fair of 1882 was planned three breeds -- Durham, Aldernays, and Devons -- were in the cattle division; so

17. Audubon Journal, May 1, 1877

18. Grand Forks Herald, January 27, 1882.

19. Polk County Journal, March 13, 1884

20. Grand Forks Herald, March 18, 1884.

Mr. Hill's offer should have attracted more attention than it seems to have. Mr. Hill in later years said that the Minnesota farmers to whom he gave livestock butchered it.²¹

In 1887 some enterprising citizens started a cheese factory. Mr. E. M. Walsh secured the promises of several farmers to sell their milk to such a factory; a subscription list was circulated and two wagons were to collect milk from farmers within a radius of ten miles. The creamery closed for the season in September, as it was found the farmers were too busy with the wheat harvest to attend to chores.²² Ten years later the annual convention of the State Dairymen was held in Crookston; Mr. E. D. Childs of Crookston was chairman, there was but a small attendance at the meeting. The farmers were wedded to wheat, says a local editor, and neglect dairying and it has elements of prosperity in it.²³ Today, 1927, dairying is said by successful Polk County farmers to return them more profits than their wheat.²⁴ The town of Gentilly (150-45) urged by the Reverend E. Theillon began the diversified farming in 1888. The Gentilly cheese factory is known throughout the Northwest for its "First Premium" cheese. In 1916 Polk County had twenty-one creameries, nineteen of which were co-operative.²⁵

21. Coulter, John Lee, Industrial History of the Red River Valley North Dakota State Historical Society Collection., Vol.3, 1910, p. 623.

22. Crookston Times, July 2, September 3, 1887.

23. Ibid., June 17, 1897.

24. Mr. Adolph Hoydt, Crookston, Minnesota, to the author.

25. Selvig, C. G. signed article in Holcombe, p. 121.

The "great bugbear of the valley" was water.²⁶ Early homeseekers had noticed that the ravines did not run into rivers but flattened out into marshes covering sections. Over such districts travel was next to impossible and on low wet land the crop could not be put in until two weeks after the farmers on neighboring uplands had theirs in. Some farmers had drained in a small way, but as a rule the outlet was in a marsh and as a whole it did not benefit the county. It was marked that the drained farms showed a crop increase of around twenty per cent. The editor of the Grank Forks Herald in 1881 had begun to advocate a drainage system for the Minnesota side of the Red River Valley. Drainage bills were introduced in the legislature of 1883, and in August 1883 the county commissioners appointed viewers for two ditches that were petitioned for, and upon a favorable report authorized their establishment.²⁷ By 1886 Polk County was nearly ready to accept a systematic drainage system aided by a state apportionment. A Drainage Convention was held in Crookston July 1886. Clay, Marshall, Wilkin, Norman, and Polk counties were represented. A drainage expert from Illinois and Mr. James J. Hill both spoke in favor of drainage. Mr. Hill's offer to pay

26. Polk County Journal, December 21, 1882.

27. Ibid., August 2, 1883.

half of the expense of a survey was accepted and twenty-five townships in Polk were surveyed.²⁸ The results of drainage are presented by the 1920 census report of Polk County.²⁹

Area of county 1,266,560 acres

Area drained by open ditches 833,953 acres

801.7 miles of open ditches completed

Principal crops on drained lands hap and corn.

Chart number XI shows tenancy on the increase together with the size of farms on the increase. This no doubt explains the decrease of rural population shown by the census of 1910. Tenants farm large areas for returns in cash and do not establish themselves upon the land for the sake of a home.

28. Crookston Times, April 24, July 3, December 11, 1886.

29. Fourteenth census, State Compendium, Minnesota, P. 124



CHAPTER V

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

The people of Polk County represent nearly every nationality of Western Europe. To show the relative strength of these various elements together with their life, and their actions and the result of these upon the social conditions of the county offers an interesting field to the investigator.

There are several claimants to the honor of being the first settler within Polk County. Since the census of 1870 returns no population for Polk County, the date claimed for settlement is usually 1870 or later. But if one will examine the manuscript census of 1860 for Minnesota, he will find Polk County has a population of 240. The census was taken by post offices of which Polk County had four. The division of the county has put three of these places definitely outside the present county. The fourth post office, Red River Junction, cannot be so disposed of, and one writer places it where East Grand Forks now is.¹ Forty persons lived there and some of them were well known personages in the Valley: Charles Cavileer, George Northrup, and Sam Painter were such. It is said by good authorities that Cavileer and Painter were living in Pembina in 1860 and had been there for some time.²

1. Holcombe, p. 57.

2. Letter of Judge W. J. Kneeshaw, Pembina, North Dakota, July 11, 1927.

Letter of George B. Winship, San Diego, California, February 23, 1928.



Marble, in September 1860 bade Cavileer good-bye and spoke of him as living near Fort Garry.³ Edward Eggleston met Northrup in the summer of 1860 and states he was then living in a cabin near Fort Abercrombie.⁴ John Schulz in the spring of 1860 met Northrup and he too states he was living near Abercrombie.⁵ Eggleston also traveled down the Red River on the boat of which Painter was the captain, he tells of Red Lake River but mentions no settlement being on it.

In view of these facts the writer concludes that Red River Junction was not at the confluence of the Red and Red Lake rivers, that Northrup lived south of the Buffalo River, and that Cavileer was living in the vicinity of Pembina. The conclusion follows that the census of 1860 is in error.

Polk County as it now exists seems to have had no white inhabitants prior to 1870. On June 8, 1921 the fiftieth anniversary of the permanent settlement of Polk County was celebrated. Levi Steenerson and others settled on the Sandhill River June 8, 1871.⁶ But a study of the declaratory statements made at the local land office shows that the first permanent settlement was made November 15, 1870 near to where East Grand Forks now is.⁷

3. Marble, Harpers Monthly, February 1861, p. 319.

4. Eggleston, Edward, "The Man That Pulls the Handcart", Harpers Monthly, February 1894, p. 467.

5. Schultz, John, The Old Crow Wing Trail, Manitoba Historical Society, Transaction No. 45, Winnipeg, 1894, p. 7.

6. Polk County Leader, Crookston, Minnesota, June 10, 1921

7. Abstract of Declaratory Statements, Oak Lake Land Office.

The date of settlement as indicated in the declaratory statement is not always truthful, for many settlers forgot the date of their actual settlement. This is due to the fact that some settled on the odd numbered sections which were in the railroad grant and the date of it attaching the right to the land was not yet settled. The date was finally established as September 4, 1872. Some persons, innocent of wrong doing, went on railroad lands, made valuable improvements and then had their proofs rejected. Senator Knute Nelson helped some of the settlers to get their patents to such lands.⁸

Probably many of the early settlers' improvements were of little consequence. Some of the claim shanties of the early days had no roofs, no door, no windows and really consisted of a few logs piled into a square.⁹

The rumor that the St. Paul, Pacific, and Manitoba Railroad was to build north through Polk County started a rush of prospective settlers into the region. The failure of the railroad in 1873 precipitated "the hard times" and the expression "catfish or no breakfast" arose.¹⁰ Due to the hard times few settlers came in for the next few years. The population increase in the first two years may be approximated for the first

8. e.g., Deeds Vol. W., p. 59

9. Case of John Dunneen, Letter Files, Oak Lake Land Office.

10. Alden, Ogle and Company (ed.) Album of Biography Red River Valley and Park Regions, Chicago, 1889, p. 165.

tax assessment list was made in June and July 1873. It shows 164 persons assessed for personal property. Of these fifty-five were in the First Commissioner District which approximately included the future county of Norman. The 109 remaining were probably all within the present area of Polk County, and probably represented a total population of some 350 persons. The state census of 1875 reports 937 persons living in Polk County.¹¹ The second and third commissioners districts, about the present limits of Polk, had 568 of these persons. The Norwegian element predominated as chart No. 3 shows, for though chart No. 2 gives 231 persons as being born in the United States the Norwegian adults in chart No. 3 form a group four times greater than their closest rivals, the Canadians.

The people were movers as chart No. 4 shows. While it is not exact it does give a picture of seekers of greener pastures; at least this is true among the thirty-four families found having children. A similar study, chart No. 5, of Huntsville township in the Second Commissioner's District shows that not a single child had been born in the same state as its father had been.

Polk County was settled by a shifting population prior to those enumerated in the census of 1875. In 1873 the Third Commissioner's District sixty individuals paid personal prop-

11. State Census, 1875, Manuscript in Minnesota Historical Society Library.



erty tax, but on the census list of 1875 the names of but thirty-eight of these appear. In the Second Commissioner's District a similar study showed but twenty-nine of the original fifty-five still living therein. Many of these were doubtlessly single men. The census of 1875 for the Second and Third Districts lists 154 heads of families of this number thirty-one are single persons, four of them are women, one being sixty-three years of age. Thirty-six individuals living in Polk County applied for naturalization papers between 1873 and 1875, and of these the names of nine are found in the census of 1875, but five of the missing did take out their final papers at the Crookston Court House in 1879-1881. It is probably safe to say that one-third of the settlers who came into Polk County between 1872 and 1875 moved out in the same period. The French-Canadian population grew rapidly, Mr. J. B. Bottineau in 1876 bringing in 119 families,¹² but most of these were settled in what is now Red Lake County. Twenty-five families from Canada came in with Martin Hoover in 1877.¹³ The Norwegian element still predominated with Yankees scattered throughout the county.¹⁴ With the spring of 1878 another rush of settlers poured into the country as

12. Audubon Journal, November 4, 1875.

13. Ibid., January 4, 1877.

14. Ibid., July 28, 1877.

in the fall of 1877 the railroad company had offered its land on very reasonable terms to settlers. The settler was to break 1/10 annually until all the tillable land was cultivated, the price was \$2.50 per acre, and the time was to suit the purchaser with interest at seven per cent.¹⁵ Between Ada and Crookston could be seen hundreds of tents, cabins, shanties, and scores of breaking teams in the summer of 1878.¹⁶

With such crowds around him the early settler who had grazed his cattle over the public domain now found himself in difficulties. His neighbors told him to fence his cattle in since that this was an agricultural land not a grazing country. The farmers discussed the advisability of having a herd law enacted. By the herd law of 1874 a Polk County farmer had no redress for damages done to his crops by stock in day time, unless he could prove he had a three rail fence four feet high on the side from which entrance was made. In 1878 the law was enacted that gave a legal remedy for all damage done, no fence being necessary. As the poor man could not afford to fence it was held by many that the new law would promote settlement of the county.¹⁷

15. Audubon Journal, October 20, 1877.

16. Polk County Journal, June 28, 1878.

17. Audubon Journal, June 2, 1877. Polk County Journal, July 19, 1878.



When an agent of the American Bible Society visited the county in 1878 he reported that Bibles printed in English, Norwegian, French, and German should be sent for distribution.¹⁸ The settlers informed their friends of the wonderful lands of the valley and the Norwegians in particular came by the hundreds.¹⁹ The quantity of certain agricultural implements sold out of Crookston in the year 1881 will show the number of settlers in that vicinity:-- 670 walking plows, 345 sulky plows, 25 gang plows, and 525 harrows.²⁰ These doubtlessly were mostly purchased by new settlers.

Good claims near settlements were becoming scarce and claim jumpers were not unknown. If the jumped claim was that of a popular man he apparently had some chance of getting the jumper off aided by his friends who did not disdain vigorous action.²¹ The people were pouring in in such numbers that it stood a man in good stead to remain on or near his land. An observer wrote, "To see the teams unloading goods at the depot, (Red Wing) one would suppose that all the people in Goodhue county were going to Polk County. Over 100 loads were put on board the cars in one day this week."²² By this time the population had a new element in it.

18. Polk County Journal, May 3, 1878.

19. Ibid., June 15, 1882.

20. Ibid., August 17, 1882.

21. Ibid., March 28, 1879

22. Ibid.

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The Swedes had formed a negligible part, fifteen out of the 568 of the population in 1875.²³ In 1883 they formed a sufficient number to receive notice from public authority. The County commissioners caused the financial statement of the county to be printed as follows:-- 1,000 copies in English, 500 Norwegian, 250 Swedish, and 250 in French.²⁴

The public land office at Crookston records present a vivid picture of the rapidity of settlement. In 1879 there were 4,100 entries made that covered 940,390 acres.²⁵

The railroad lands, too, went fast, for example, in fifteen days in May 1882 the railroad land office sold 32,778 acres.

A very large percent of those who came in were of Norwegian birth. Levi Steenerson who returned in 1882 from a visit to Norway reported that thousands of Norwegians were preparing to come to the Red River Valley.²⁶

The first Polk County men to be elected to a state office were Norwegians. Bernard Sampson of Crookston was a member of the house in 1881. At that time Loren Fletcher, who was heavily interested in Polk County lands, was Speaker of the House and Sampson who was utterly ignorant of legislative procedure, it was said he could write to the extent of signing his own

23. Chart No. 11.

24. Polk County Journal, April 12, 1883.

25. Northern Tier, January 10, 1880.

26. Polk County Journal, June 15, 1882.



name, was rumored to be Fletcher's henchman. Sampson would sit like a statue and the Speaker would announce that Mr. Sampson begs leave to introduce the following bill, it is a local bill and he desires an immediate vote upon it. It was said Sampson showed no surprise even if Fletcher had drafted the bill without consulting him.²⁷ He was elected to the State Senate in 1886. Sampson seems to have been a man of ability and foresight. He advocated drainage at a time when he was laughed at for his belief in "duck farms," but in 1881 he introduced a drainage bill in the house stating that he believed that the drained land would prove very fertile. When Sampson, as a member of the senate in 1889, was reported to be working to defeat a bill which would have permitted Crookston to have bonded itself to aid in building a railroad, he was hanged in effigy.²⁸ Much of the ill-feeling against Sampson seems to go back to the issue raised in 1882, "Norak versus citizen."

Halver Steenerson, a Norwegian, was the second Polk County man to gain more than local fame. He was elected to the State Senate in 1882. His work in Congress on rural free delivery made him a national figure.

The relative position of the Norwegian element in public

27. Polk County Journal, October 19, 1882.

28. Crookston Times, March 30, 1889.

affairs in various stages of the development of Polk County may be roughly indicated by the brief study made of the biographies of prominent citizens in so-called "county histories." It is assumed of course that practically all citizens of affairs have their biographies in such books.

The first book found giving county histories with biographical sketches was published in 1874.²⁹ In it are but two Polk County men, Richard Hussey and Bernhard Sampson, both of Crookston and listed but briefly in the patron's directory as real estate dealers. Hussey was born in New York state of English parentage. Sampson, though born in Sweden, was of Norwegian parentage.

The first strictly Red River Valley album of biography found was published in 1889.³⁰ It contains the biographies of 128 Polk County citizens. Fifty-six of these were born in the United States; forty-one in Canada; three in Sweden; thirteen in Norway; really fourteen as one of the three Swedish citizens had been born to Norwegian parents who happened to be in Sweden at that time. The population of the county in 1890 was 30,192. What part was Norwegian by birth was in no records available to the writer, but in 1910 sixteen per cent had been born in Norway. In 1889 it seems

29. Andreas, A. I., Illustrated Historical Atlas of Minnesota, Chicago, 1874.

30. Album of Biography Red River Valley and Park Regions, Alden, Ogle, and Company, Chicago, 1889.

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likely that twenty per cent at least would have been born in Norway. That twenty per cent furnishes eleven per cent of the leaders of the county. It is interesting to note that but one woman is listed among the 128 and that she is of Irish birth.

In 1902 a compendium of history³¹ gives eighty-eight Polk County celebrities. Of these thirty-eight were born in Norway twenty-eight were born in the United States, and two in Sweden. In 1900 the population numbered 35,429, after the strongly French-Canadian element of Red Lake County had been set off in 1897. It is no doubt safe to assume that twenty per cent of those living then in Polk County had been born in Norway. On that basis the Norwegian element furnished forty-three per cent of the leading citizens of the county.

A compendium of history and biography published in 1916³² gives biographies of 429 citizens of Polk County. Of these 191 are Norwegian by birth or by parentage. The population of the county in 1910 was 36,001 of whom 5,515 were born in Norway and 7,665 had both parents born in Norway. We will assume then that in 1916 the Norwegian element formed thirty-three per cent of the population. That percentage then furnished forty-four per cent of the leaders of Polk County affairs.

31. Compendium of History and Biography of Northern Minnesota George A. Ogle and Company, Chicago, 1902.

32. Holcombe, R. E., Compendium of History and Biography Polk County, Minnesota, W. H. Bingham and Company, Minneapolis, 1916.



The present (1927) influence of the Norwegian element may be shown by listing the county officials and their nationalities:

Office

County Commissioners	Birthplace	Father's Birthplace
First District	United States	Norway
Second District	United States	Germany
Third District	United States	Norway
Fourth District	United States	Norway
Fifth District	America	Ireland
Auditor	United States	Germany
Treasurer	United States	Norway
Sheriff	United States	Norway
Register of Deeds	Wisconsin	Norway
County Attorney	United States	Massachusetts
Coroner	United States	Norway
Surveyor	United States	Norway
Superintendent of Schools	Norway	Norway
Judge of Probate	United States	Norway
Clerk of Court	United States	Norway

The Norwegian element by land of birth is now decreasing. In 1920 there were 4,193 Norwegians by birth in the county, a decrease of 1,322 from the census figures of 1910.

A comparison of the census of 1910 with that of 1920, chart No. VI, shows that Polk County is at the present rate

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soon to be largely peopled by people of native white parentage. In 1900 of the 35,429 persons in the county 37.2 per cent were foreign born whites; in 1910 but 29.4 per cent so classified;³³ and in 1920 it had dropped to 21.5 per cent..³⁴

Chart number VI probably has little value as no doubt some of the nationalities represented returned to the home land to participate in the World War. The 1930 census will probably show a new element, the Mexican who comes to work in the sugar beet fields.

The rural population of Polk County decreased 7.4 per cent in the decade, 1900 to 1910.³⁵ There was also a decided decrease from the rural population of 1890 in many of the townships; this decrease is depicted in Maps number 6 and 7. No specific reason can be advanced for the decrease. The black areas on Map No. 7 constitute some of the finest farming lands of Polk County³⁶ and in the main those townships have only a small amount of delinquent taxes.³⁷ One keen observer of events in the county ventures the opinion that the families at first consisted chiefly of young married persons and by 1890 there had been a considerable increase in the size of the families, but no such increase in the number of families. The children

33. Thirteenth Census of the United States, abstract, Supplement for Minnesota, Washington, 1913, p. 618.

34. Fourteenth Census, State Compendium, Minnesota, Washington, 1924, p. 47.

35. Census, 1910, Minnesota Supplement, p. 572.

36. Mr. W. Low, Walsh and Low Real Estate Co., Crookston.

37. Mr. Welte, County Auditor, Polk County.

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then went to the cities leaving the old folks with perhaps one son to help run the farm. This would decrease the population, particularly so, as he said the young man who stayed on the farm if married seldom had as large a family as his father.³⁸ To further show how the total population has increased in the two well defined areas Chart No. VII was constructed by adding the city or village population of any such place to the rural population of the township in which it is situated. From this chart Map number 8 was constructed. When it is compared with Map number 7 it shows clearly that the decrease was not caused by any rural center being incorporated between the two census periods. No information appears to be available as to tenancy or size of farms in the decreasing population areas, chart No. XI being compiled from figures for the entire county and not from the separate townships' returns which are not available to the author.

Regardless of what their nationalities may have been all the settlers were confident that they had reached the promised land. Some called their settlement the New Jerusalem,³⁹ one city possessed "brick stores, which in this region confers a sort of municipal aristocracy."⁴⁰ Bricks meant permanency. When not engaged in planning railroads, canals, or town sites

38. Mr. John Sangstad, Register of Deeds, Polk County

39. Audubon Journal, September 1, 1877.

40. Van Dyke, Harpers Monthly, May 1880, p. 868.

the settlers had time for literary societies, Philharmonic societies and dramatic clubs.⁴¹

Neither did they disregard the educational welfare of their children who were to inherit the homes carved out of the wilderness. The first school district was established on March 28, 1876,⁴² but as early as 1874 a school had been organized by some public spirited citizens. A young lady from St. Paul was hired to teach, she soon married the owner of a town site and school was dismissed.

Concern for the morals of the rising generation found expression.⁴³ The first church organized in the county seems to have been "Christ's Church at Crookston." It had a Sunday School for the children.⁴⁴ The field being opened rival churches soon made their appearance.⁴⁵ The Orthodox theory of creation was questioned. Henry Ward Beecher's lecture on "Evolution" was soon followed through by De Witt Talmadge's on "Great Mistakes."⁴⁶ But it was in the field of politics that the greatest number of settlers could give vent to their convictions.

In the first elections the man and not the party was the issue.⁴⁷ By 1876 a new element entered the field. Nationalities must stick together. The Scandinavians voted the Repub-

41. Audubon Journal, January 13, November 17, December 8, 1877.

42. Minutes Polk County Commissioners, Vol, I, March 28, 1876.

43. Audubon Journal, August 16, 1877.

44. Ibid., December 15, 1877.

45. Polk County Journal, January 24, 31, 1879.

46. Ibid., July 6, 1882; August 21, 1883.

47. Statement of Mr. E. M. Walsh, first auditor of Polk County, to the author.

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 lican ticket because Hans Mattson was for that party.

The county was evenly divided on the issue of amending the constitution so as to permit the disposal of internal improvement lands to secure funds to retire the railroad bonds. Many felt the bonds were not a moral obligation as the railroad had done nothing to help the settlement of the country.⁴⁹ The bond issue came up again in 1878 (the vote is given in Chart No. IX together with the congressional vote). Some few at least did feel that the honesty of the state should be proved.⁵⁰

In the election of 1882 the Scandinavians turned out en masse for Knute Nelson. Halver Steenerson, a Crookston lawyer of Norse descent, led the Republicans at a county nominating convention held June 17. A double-header sprang into existence, the Kindred men, Nelson's opponent, nominated a ticket, denounced the Nelson faction, but at the District Convention Steenerson at the head of his faction nominated Nelson in a double-header. Kindred was nominated by the other party of the convention. The campaign developed much heat, the issue was declared to be "Norak versus citizen" by one paper.⁵¹ With this strong feeling, politics and nationalities both being involved, the electors went to the polls.

48. Audubon Journal, November 4, 1876.

49. Ibid., May 12, 1877 (the division of the vote is shown in Chart No. VIII, for a history of the bonds see Folwell, Vol. II).

50. Ibid., November 22, 1878.

51. Polk County Journal, October 26, 1882.

The vote is given in Chart No. X.⁵² Nelson secured practically every Scandinavian vote, for local offices party lines and nationalities gave way to individual liking for the candidates.⁵³

The French element in 1883 organized the L'Union Canadienne of Polk County.⁵⁴ One man, whom they strongly opposed was elected so their power was probably slight.

What they considered to be abuses in the transportation and marketing conditions stirred up more feeling in the people of the county than had any previous controversy. The railroads and the Miller, association of Minneapolis were charged with collusion to the injury of the farmers.⁵⁵ "Out of the clutches of the Manitoba Railroad" was the headline of a valley newspaper when news arrived that a competing road would build into the valley.⁵⁶ Meetings were held to discuss bonding the county for the construction of a railroad to Duluth so as to avoid shipping to Minneapolis. On February 2, 1884, a "Farmers' Alliance of Northwestern Minnesota" was formed at Crookston.

An outlet to market through Hudson's Bay was proposed. The Polk County delegates to an international meeting held

52. Polk County Journal, November 23, 1882.

53. Judge Wm. Watts to the author. Bygland gave all its votes to Nelson, but gave Watts, on the Kindred ticket, twice as many votes as to McLean, the Nelson ticket candidate (Chart No. X).

54. Polk County Journal, October 18, 1883.

55. Ibid.

56. Grand Forks Herald, March 4, 1882.

at Emerson, Manitoba stated that Polk County produce would seek an outlet to European markets via the Hudson's Bay route once it was opened.⁵⁷

The agitation brought results. In 1885 the law creating the Board of Railroad and Warehouse Commissioners was enacted.⁵⁸

The grain marketing affairs never have been adjusted to the satisfaction of all Polk County farmers. The Grand Jury of 1907 charged that grain was arbitrarily fixed and the dealers drove out of business anyone who paid other than the fixed price.⁵⁹ The strength of the Farm-Labor party and the interest displayed in the St. Lawrence outlet project testify to the present unrest among Polk County folk.

57. Grand Forks Herald, March 7, 1884.

58. Hicks, John D., "The Origin and History of the Farmers' Alliance in Minnesota," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, December 1922, p. 217

59. Court Minutes, Polk County, Vol. E, p. 359.

SUMMARY

The region of Polk County was inhabited by a few whites at the opening of the nineteenth century. The journal of Henry and that of Thompson give detailed accounts of the life of the trapper and of the explorer in the region.

Practically depleted of game by 1800, the region, nevertheless, was contested for by Sioux and Chippewas. The Chippewas secured it, and in 1864 they ceded it to the United States.

Polk County was created in 1858. It has been reduced in area four times. In its one boundary dispute it was in error. The county was organized and held its first election in 1872.

Towns and cities were first organized on the routes of transportation. Disputes over the title of desirable sites were not unknown and retarded the growth of Crookston and the settlement of the railroad lands.

The county court began functioning in 1879. The citizens were law abiding, although the court seemingly failed to convict many violators of the liquor laws.

Transportation in the early days was carried on by ox cart. Contrary to the general belief two cart trails instead of one crossed the country.

Steamboats and railroads brought in the early settlers. The prosperity of the county declined and rose with the fortunes of the railroad. James J. Hill insured by his activi-

ties the future of the railroad.

Lumbering caused Crookston to attain her greatest population. The bonaza farmer emulating the lumber barons has but one crop -- wheat.

Diversified farming is now gaining impetus, but tenancy and size of farms continue to increase.

Permanent settlers established themselves within the present county in 1870-71. The Federal census of 1860 probably lists more dwelling in what is Polk County.

Norwegians more than any nationality have shaped the destiny of Polk County. They were among the first to advocate reforms in marketing and transportation.

CHART NUMBER II

POPULATION STATISTICS, 1875,--SECOND AND THIRD COMMISSIONER DISTRICTS

<u>Country of Birth</u>	<u>Number</u>
United States	231
Norway	171
Canada	77
Ireland	19
Sweden	15
England	11
Prussia	6
Scotland	4
Denmark	4
France	3
Italy	1
Switzerland	1
Australia	1
New Zealand	1
Finland	1
Missed by author's count	<u>21</u>
	568

CHART NUMBER III

Population Statistics, 1875,--Second and Third Commissioner's Districts. Nativity of the head of the family and other persons in the family not wife or children of family's head.

<u>Country of Birth</u>	<u>Number</u>
Norway	77
Canada	19
United States	18
Ireland	17
England	14
Scotland	8
Prussia	6
Sweden	5
France	4
Denmark	3
Switzerland	2
Finland	1

CHART NUMBER IV

Statistics of the Third Commissioner District. Moves of families as shown by birthplaces, census of 1875.

<u>Family Number</u>	<u>Father's Birthplace</u>	<u>Child's Birthplace</u>	<u>Child's Birthplace</u>	<u>Child's Birthplace</u>
1	Canada	Minnesota		
2	Indiana	Michigan	Minnesota	
3	Prussia	Minnesota		
4	Norway	Minnesota		
5	Manitoba	Dakota Territory	Minnesota	
6	Manitoba	Minnesota		
7	New Hampshire	Indiana	Minnesota	
8	Pennsylvania	Minnesota		
9	Canada	Minnesota		
10	New York	Minnesota		
11	Ohio	Minnesota		
12	Ireland	Nebraska	Minnesota	
13	Norway	Minnesota		
14	Norway	Dakota Territory	Minnesota	
15	Norway	Minnesota		
16	Norway	Minnesota		
17	England	Wisconsin	Minnesota	
18	Massachusetts	Wisconsin	Minnesota	
19	Norway	Wisconsin	Minnesota	
20	Norway	Minnesota		
21	Norway	Minnesota		
22	England	Minnesota		
23	Maine	Minnesota		

CHART NUMBER IV -- continued

<u>Family Number</u>	<u>Father's Birthplace</u>	<u>Child's Birthplace</u>	<u>Child's Birthplace</u>	<u>Child's Birthplace</u>
24	Dakota Territory	Minnesota		
25	Prussia	Wisconsin	Minnesota	
26	Denmark	Minnesota		
27	Denmark	Minnesota		
28	Norway	Minnesota		
29	Norway	Minnesota		
30	Norway	Minnesota		
31	Vermont	New York	Minnesota	
32	New York	Minnesota		
33	Sweden	Minnesota		
34	England	Australia	New Zealand	Minnesota

CHART NUMBER V

Population Statistics, 1875. Moves of twenty-five families
in Huntsville township as shown by birth place of children.

<u>Family Number</u>	<u>Father's Birthplace</u>	<u>Child's Birthplace</u>	<u>Child's Birthplace</u>
1	New Brunswick	Minnesota	
2	Pennsylvania	Wisconsin	Minnesota
3	Pennsylvania	Dakota Territory	Minnesota
4	Dakota Territory	Minnesota	
5	Dakota Territory	Minnesota	
6	Dakota Territory	Minnesota	
7	Canada	Minnesota	
8	Sweden	Canada	Minnesota
9	Canada	Dakota Territory	Minnesota
10	Canada	Minnesota	
11	Sweden	Minnesota	
12	Ohio	Minnesota	
13	Ireland	Minnesota	
14	Scotland	Minnesota	
15	Canada	Minnesota	
16	Ireland	Canada	Minnesota
17	Canada	Minnesota	
18	Canada	Minnesota	
19	Massachussetts	New York	Minnesota
20	Canada	Minnesota	

CHART NUMBER VI

DECREASE IN CERTAIN FOREIGN NATIONALITIES

<u>Born In</u>	<u>Census of 1910</u>	<u>Census of 1920</u>
Canada	1465	1074
Denmark	172	145
Finland	7	4
Ireland	136	66
Italy	348	2
Russia	140	118
Sweden	1,474	1208
Switzerland	20	13
Norway	6,515	4193

CHART NUMBER VII

TOTAL POPULATION RURAL AND URBAN WITHIN TOWNSHIPS. 1910 and 1920.

<u>Township</u>	<u>1910</u>	<u>1920</u>
Andover	-	-
Angus	235	263
Badger	391	447
Belgium	77	131
Brandsvold	671	587
Brandt	70	136
Brislet	170	187
Bygland	643	588
Chester	501	380
Columbia	719	875
Crookston	-	-
Eden	711	690
Esther	370	308
Euclid	309	395
Fairfax	353	364
Fanny	272	184
Farley	161	227
Fisher	663	654
Garden	656	655
Garfield	1247	1463
Gentilly	406	502
Godfrey	398	500
Grand Forks	322	315

CHART NUMBER VII--continued.

<u>Township</u>	<u>1910</u>	<u>1920</u>
Grove Park	542	633
Gally	487	572
Hammond	153	168
Helgeland	121	129
Higdem	252	285
Hill River	572	527
Hubbard	619	643
Huntsville	606	530
Johnson	247	306
Kertsonville	177	258
Keystone	184	222
King	1215	1352
Knute	980	1099
Lesser	520	478
Liberty	268	330
Lowell	-	-
Nesbit	127	223
Northland	412	432
Onsted	159	215
Parnell	131	172
Queen	537	623
Reis	364	499
Rhinehart	2758	2655
Roome	356	479

CHART NUMBER VII--continued

<u>Township</u>	<u>1910</u>	<u>1920</u>
Rosebud	1641	1521
Russia	247	289
Sandsville	221	221
Scandia	100	195
Sletten	548	512
Sullivan	282	279
Tabor	420	375
Tilden	230	228
Tynsid	217	183
Vineland	500	587
Winger	728	930
Woodside	539	575

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CHART NUMBER VIII

Vote on the proposal to amend the constitution so as to permit the disposal of internal improvement lands.

<u>Place</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Crookston	15	11
Fisher's Landing	76	7
Richland	2	8
Red Lake Falls	15	0
Bygland	0	10
Huntsville	10	4
Vineland	0	20
Shelley	0	27
McDonaldsville	0	13
Ibssum	2	18
First District	<u>1</u>	<u>7</u>
	121	128

Whether this vote indicates anything concerning the honesty of the people is to be doubted. Certainly though the four places that seem most likely to profit by railroad activities gave it the majority of their votes. It was claimed that fifty fraudulent votes for the measure were cast in Fisher's Landing.¹ In the same election Pillsbury received 238 votes for Governor and Banning but 19.²

1. Audubon Journal, June 23, 1877.

2. Ibid.

CHART NUMBER IX

Vote on the Recovery and Destruction of the State Railroad Bonds, and the Congressional vote of 1878.

<u>Place</u>	<u>Washburn</u>	<u>Donnelly</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Bygland	32	3	-	-
Farley	9	24	-	18
Vineland	35	7	-	42
Fossum	50	0	-	41
Andover	21	0	-	23
Red Lake Falls	78	6	-	82
Lowell	26	10	-	33
McDonaldsville	36	15	4	48
First District	23	0	-	20
Fisher	37	51	2	75
Huntsville	48	19	-	65
Shelley	41	0	-	39
Crookston	<u>213</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>253</u>
	659	180	9	739

Table 1: Summary of Data				
Year	Category	Value	Unit	Notes
2010	A	100	kg	
2011	A	120	kg	
2012	A	150	kg	
2013	A	180	kg	
2014	A	200	kg	
2015	A	220	kg	
2016	A	250	kg	
2017	A	280	kg	
2018	A	300	kg	
2019	A	320	kg	
2020	A	350	kg	
2010	B	50	kg	
2011	B	60	kg	
2012	B	70	kg	
2013	B	80	kg	
2014	B	90	kg	
2015	B	100	kg	
2016	B	110	kg	
2017	B	120	kg	
2018	B	130	kg	
2019	B	140	kg	
2020	B	150	kg	
2010	C	30	kg	
2011	C	35	kg	
2012	C	40	kg	
2013	C	45	kg	
2014	C	50	kg	
2015	C	55	kg	
2016	C	60	kg	
2017	C	65	kg	
2018	C	70	kg	
2019	C	75	kg	
2020	C	80	kg	

CHART NUMBER X

OFFICIAL VOTE OF POLK COUNTY, 1882

	<u>Member of Congress</u>			<u>State Senator</u>		<u>County Attorney</u>	
	Nelson-Kindred-Barnum			Steenerson-Thompson		McLean-Watts	
Angus	16	16	8	16	25	11	29
Andover	38	41	3	38	44	38	42
Bygland	57	-	-	50	4	19	38
Brislet	11	17	-	11	16	7	21
Black River	33	20	2	46	9	11	42
Belgium	-	13	5	-	18	-	18
City Crookston	132	201	116	205	233	172	273
Crookston	20	17	1	23	15	14	23
Euclid	9	34	17	9	50	13	48
Fanny	3	8	1	2	11	5	8
Fisher	96	82	26	42	164	24	178
Fairfax	29	16	9	31	24	15	40
Farley	13	35	1	18	36	10	38
Godfrey	36	14	1	31	19	30	21
Grand Forks	38	16	48	70	31	24	77
Garfield	81	8	-	81	8	33	55
Gorden	52	-	-	51	-	42	10
Grove Park	7	21	1	8	21	19	9
Gentilly	1	76	2	3	76	2	77
Hubbard	72	-	-	57	-	22	18
Hammond	2	18	2	3	19	2	20
Huntsville	32	5	1	16	22	8	30

CHART NUMBER X--continued

Nelson-Kindred-Barnum Steenerson-Thompson McLean-Watts

Higdem	23	12	-	22	12	32	3
Kertsonville	-	19	-	-	19	-	19
Louisville	2	48	9	18	41	-	58
Liberty	22	18	1	19	22	15	25
Lowell	24	32	7	32	31	18	46
Lambert	-	32	-	-	32	-	22
Lake Pleasant	1	63	6	1	69	32	38
Maple Lake	31	5	-	31	5	25	11
Nesbit	6	22	-	3	25	4	24
North Star	5	3	2	4	6	2	7
Olmstead	23	-	-	23	-	23	-
Red Lake Falls	29	89	24	45	97	76	66
Reie	20	13	12	22	22	20	23
Roome	52	1	2	46	9	41	14
Rocksbury	33	3	-	32	4	16	21
River Falls	43	7	-	44	5	16	34
Sandsville	20	-	1	18	1	4	-
Sanders	21	-	-	21	-	20	1
Sullivan	10	7	-	15	2	15	2
Tynsid	30	9	-	27	10	2	37
Tilden	2	15	1	-	18	18	-
Terribonne	4	71	-	18	57	20	55
Vineland	73	-	-	65	7	7	64
Fifth District	<u>5</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>-</u>
	1298	1127	309	1316	1339	937	1685

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CHART NUMBER XI

AVERAGE SIZE, NUMBER AND TENURE OF FARMS IN POLK COUNTY FROM 1880

<u>Year</u>	<u>Average Size</u>	<u>Number of</u> <u>Farms</u>	<u>Operated by</u> <u>Owner</u>	<u>Per Cent Worked</u> <u>By Owner</u>	<u>Per Cent Operated</u> <u>By Tenant</u>
1880	215.4 acres			98.7	
1890	193.2 acres			92.7	
1900	324.3 acres	4340	3840	88.5	10.5
1910	252.2 acres	3525	2859	81.1	17.8
1920	306.1 acres	4200	3062	72.5	26.5

DISTRIBUTION OF FARMS AS TO SIZE

<u>Size</u>	<u>1910</u>	<u>1920</u>
Under 3 acres	3	2
3 to 9 acres	18	31
10 to 19 acres	36	44
20 to 49 acres	186	185
50 to 99 acres	294	364
100 to 174 acres	1191	1308
175 to 259 acres	507	691
260 to 499 acres	996	1231
500 to 999 acres	269	317
1000 and over	26	27

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CHART NUMBER XII

Special election held May 24, 1915 on the question of prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors in Polk County.

<u>Town</u>	<u>Registered Voters</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Andover	70	40	29
Angus	59	24	35
Badger	86	74	12
Belgium	35	20	15
Branisvold	137	117	19
Brandt	26	12	14
Brislet	28	20	8
England	125	110	15
Chester	72	52	5
Columbia	125	85	18
Crookston Township	110	56	54
Eden	121	89	31
Esther	79	49	20
Euclid	66	24	40
Fairfax	65	31	32
Fanny	42	19	23
Farley	48	7	43
Fisher	217	101	61
Garden	194	133	19
Garfield	137	116	21
Gentilly	82	25	56
Godfrey	139	90	14
Grand Forks	81	47	34

CHART NUMBER XII--continued

<u>Town</u>	<u>Registered Voters</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Grove Park	64	41	23
Gully	96	66	30
Hammond	41	21	20
Helgeland	24	16	8
Higdem	68	64	4
Hill River	110	87	22
Hubbard	131	87	44
Huntsville	114	58	55
Johnson	82	47	5
Kertsonville	43	17	25
Keystone	51	22	29
King	112	80	32
Knute	155	122	19
Lessor	123	75	25
Liberty	66	35	31
Lowell	113	40	73
Nesbit	63	34	29
Northland	105	41	63
Onstad	43	33	9
Purnell	34	7	27
Queen	102	80	22
Reis	61	41	20

CHART NUMBER XII--continued

<u>Town</u>	<u>Registered Voters</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Rhinehart	36	12	24
Roome	93	80	13
Rosebud	148	86	23
Russia	70	36	21
Sandsville	59	33	11
Scandia	31	24	7
Sletten	98	61	36
Sullivan	55	36	19
Tabor	100	11	89
Tilden	49	16	31
Tynsid	42	27	15
Vineland	97	72	25
Winger	204	152	20
Woodside	125	117	8
East Grand Forks	697	124	555
Beltrami Village	48	37	11
Crookston City	1487	561	923
Climax Village	56	33	23
Erskine Village	103	63	29
Fosston Village	183	123	58
Fertile Village	154	111	42
Langby Village	31	15	16
Mentor Village	81	44	37
McIntosh Village	170	105	65
	<u>8162</u>	<u>4434</u>	<u>3334</u>

8162 registered votes

yes--4434

7781 votes cast

no--3334

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The following persons gave freely of their time in telling to the author of their experiences in Polk County. Without their aid much information would have been left undisturbed in the dusty archives of the past.

Mr. E. M. Walsh
 Mr. John Saugstad
 Judge William Watts

Mr. W. B. Sheffield
 Mr. A. D. Stephens
 Mr. John Kirsch

My thanks are also extended to the various county and city officials who aided and facilitated my researches with un-failing courtesy.

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VITA

Born at La Porte, Indiana, August 10, 1890.

Graduated from the La Porte High School, 1909.

Student at Tri-State Normal College, Angola, Indiana, 1914-15.

Student at the North Dakota Agricultural College, 1921-23,
received degree B. S. in Education, 1923.

Student at Northwestern University in the four summer
sessions, 1924-27.

Served in the United States Navy six years, 1909-13, 1917-19.

Taught the Seventh and Eighth Grades at Anemoose, North
Dakota, 1915-17.

Taught the Eighth Grade at Larimore, North Dakota, 1919-21.

Principal of the Junior High School, Crookston, Minnesota,
1923-28.

Married.

Member of: Presbyterian Church, Phi Kappa Phi, Phi Delta Kappa.

An article, "Polk County and the Federal Census of 1860" has
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Minnesota History.

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